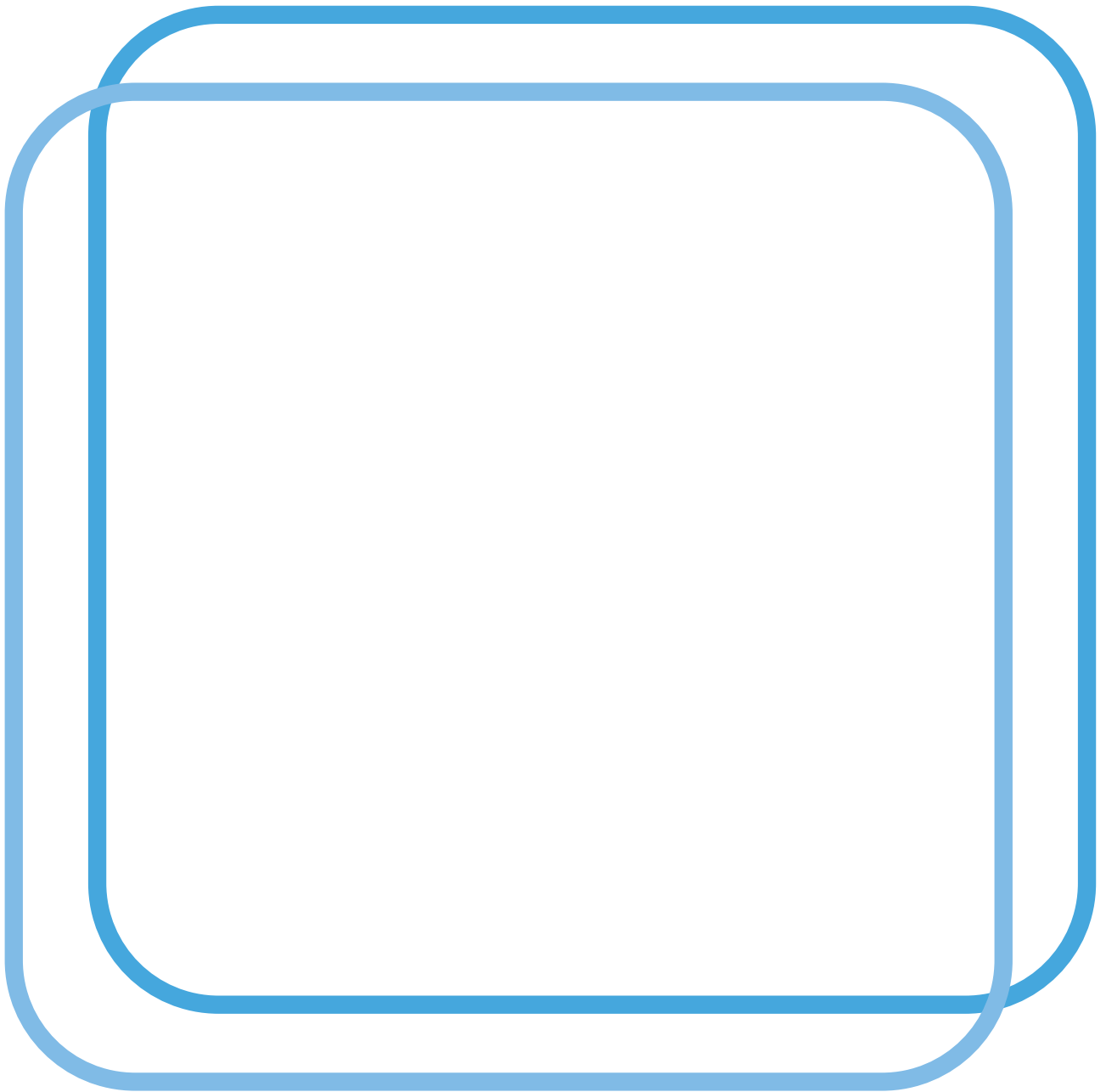


Dermatitis in Hairdressers



Work-Related Contact Dermatitis in Hairdressers



Safer Business - Better Health

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Introduction

<p>Why focus on work-related contact dermatitis?</p>	<p>Work-related contact dermatitis accounts for a significant proportion of work-related ill health and therefore a specific Skin Disease National Project has been set up to address this.</p> <p>It is estimated that in 2004/05 there were 29,000 cases of work related skin disease, however, the</p>	<p>true figure is likely to be higher than this. A recent study of British Hairdressers estimated that over 45% (approx 50,000) suffer from a certain degree of dermatitis</p>
<p>What is dermatitis?</p>	<p>Dermatitis is an inflammatory condition of the skin, which can vary in severity. Dermatitis is not infectious, so it cannot be passed from one person to another.</p> <p>Typical signs of dermatitis are: dryness, itching, redness, swelling, blistering, cracking, flaking and bleeding. In severe cases nails can also be affected. Work-related dermatitis is caused or made worse by work. It can develop as a consequence of workplace exposure to physical, chemical (including 'wet work') or biological agents or to mechanical</p>	<p>forces. Wet work is of particular concern when in combination with exposure to soaps, detergents or solvents (causative agents) as the skin is eventually stripped of its natural protection.</p> <p>The most commonly affected part of the body is the hands. Hand dermatitis accounts for almost 75% of all dermatitis. This is because hands are often used as tools, without suitable precautions, allowing exposure of the skin to hazardous agents.</p>
<p>How does exposure happen?</p>	<p>A causative agent may come into contact with the skin in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Immersing - hands in chemicals and water● Direct handling - of contaminated workplaces or cloths soaked in cleaning chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Splashing - when liquid or powdery chemicals are mixed or handled

How do I identify hazardous agents?

In terms of dermatitis, chemicals fall into two categories: irritant and skin sensitising. The containers of hazardous chemicals and products must carry labels identifying the hazards. Key words relevant to health, including dermatitis, are corrosive, irritant, harmful, toxic or very toxic. You must be fully aware of the labels and have evidence to show that they are using this information for risk control.

Chemicals or chemical products labelled with the following 'R' phrases would indicate that they have the potential to cause dermatitis. You should know which, if any, of the 'R' phrase(s) is applicable to the product in use and you must apply this information when making risk control decisions.

R38 - irritating to the skin

R43 - may cause sensitisation by skin contact

R66 - repeated exposure may cause skin dryness or cracking

Chemicals or chemical products with the following hazard phrases have the potential to cause dermatitis at low concentrations. In other words, exposure of the skin to the concentrated chemical or product would cause chemical burns, but a diluted concentration (working solution) may have the potential to cause dermatitis. Employers should be aware of this potential and take action to minimize the risk.

R34 - causes burns

R35 - causes severe burns

The absence of a label does not necessarily mean that a substance is safe in terms of its potential to cause dermatitis and this needs to be recognised when assessing risk.

I've heard I have to carry out health surveillance - is this correct?

Health surveillance may be a new concept for a lot of businesses. It is a very useful tool for the early detection and prevention of dermatitis. Early signs can include dry skin, redness, cracking, flaking and blisters. Employers should be aware that health surveillance is not a substitute for the required control measures but it is part of the risk management package.

Employers are required to arrange for suitable health surveillance under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, where:-

- There is exposure to wet work and/or substances known to cause dermatitis and

- There is a reasonable likelihood that the working procedures in place would lead to dermatitis

To meet the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Approved Code of Practice, as a minimum, employers need to appoint and train a responsible person to look actively for signs of dermatitis. A responsible person is someone appointed by the employer, who is competent to carry out the relevant procedure, and is charged with reporting to the employer the findings of the procedure. This person may be a supervisor, foreman, first aider, the or employers.

I've heard I have to do health surveillance - is this correct?

Where there is a risk of dermatitis, the responsible person is expected to:

- Carry out skin condition assessment prior to someone joining the company or as soon as possible after an employee has started to work
- Carry out periodic checking of the hands and forearms of employees for early signs of dermatitis
- Keep records of the skin checks
- Inform the employer of the outcomes of the skin checks so that he or she can take necessary action

- If there is an outbreak of dermatitis, advise the employer to seek expert help for managing this and for restoring adequate control of exposure.

The responsible person may carry out skin inspection by direct observation of the skin, using a questionnaire or some other method within his/her competence.

How do I manage sickness absence?

Businesses need to tell their employees that:

- It is their policy to help employees return to work following sickness absence
- They have a duty to know the cause of employees sickness,

in case it is work-related. If it is, there is a duty to report it to the enforcing authority and review systems in place to prevent the illness happening again.

On the following page is a checklist to help you get you started it is recommended that it is used in conjunction with the risk assessment section and the COSHH section

Work-related Contact Dermatitis in Hairdressers Checklist

This checklist has been designed as an aid to help you in assessing Contact Dermatitis hazards within your business. This can be used in conjunction with the risk assessment sheet and the COSHH section to help identify possible hazards.

Name of business:	
Nature of business:	
Address:	
Name of person completing:	Date:

	Section 1	Yes	No
1	Does your premises have COSHH assessments for all hazardous substances on the premises?		
2	Do you have safety data sheets for all hazardous substances?		

	Section 2	Yes	No
1	Do you/your employees know what contact dermatitis is?		
2	Have you considered ensuring that employees wear gloves for all types of work including hair washing, perming and drying?		
3	Do you/your employees know how to correctly put on and remove protective gloves?		
4	Are you actively avoiding the use of latex gloves?		

	Section 3	Yes	No
1	Do you have a nominated person who conducts health surveillance?		
2	Is this surveillance recorded?		
3	Have you ever reported a case of contact dermatitis as a reportable illness?		

	Section 4	Yes	No
1	Do you/your employees regularly immerse their hands in water?		
2	Do you/ your employees directly handle wet/damp work cloths?		
3	Do you provide hand cream for after wet working?		

	Section 5	Yes	No
	Are you aware that the following are irritants? Bleaching agents Dyes Permanent wave solutions Shampoos Wet working		

	Section 6	Yes	No
	Are you aware that the following are skin sensitisers? Dyes Nickel in tools – scissors Persulphates Perfumes Latex rubber protein Phenylenediamine (PPD) Formaldehyde releasers Resorcinol (anti dandruff agent)		

	Section 7	Yes	No
1	Are you aware that once sensitisation has occurred you will never stop being sensitive to the allergen?		
2	Are you aware that once sensitisation has occurred the sensitive skin area is highly likely to spread to other body parts		

NOTE

This checklist has been produced to start you thinking of what hazards/controls you have at the premise. The list is not exhaustive and there maybe hazards/controls that have not been covered.